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Oklahoma's Williams is an American Star of Teaching

With her husband, David, trying to decide on which grade level to teach, Deborah Williams figured the father of eight and grandfather of seven more would be a good fit for elementary school.

Turns out Mrs. Williams was right, with proof coming last month when David Williams was selected the 2006 American Star of Teaching award winner for Oklahoma.

Carolyn Snowbarger, director of the Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher initiative, and U.S. Rep. Ernest Istook presented Williams with the award during a ceremony at the state Capital Complex in Oklahoma City last month.

One teacher from each state and the District of Columbia was selected for the award by a committee of former teachers at the Department of Education from about 4,000 nominations.

"Teachers like David Williams never give up on a child," Snowbarger said in a statement. "They believe every child, regardless of race, income or zip

code, can achieve high standards in school."



David Williams

"In the military...it's like the unit becomes a family. (As a teacher) it's almost like you develop a camaraderie with your students where they want to learn."

— David Williams

Williams becomes the third Troops to Teachers participant to earn a national award in the past year. Last December, Daniel Leija won the American Star of Teaching award for Texas and Eric Combs was selected the 2006 teacher of the year for Ohio.

Williams taught fifth grade at Walters Elementary School in Lawton before switching to Trinity Christian Academy this fall.

While at Walters, 98 percent of Williams' students scored at satisfactory or higher on mathematics testing in spring of 2006, according to Education Department records.

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In the news

Newspapers highlight Troops to Teachers heading back to school

When Lakewood (Wash.) Clover Park High assistant principal Edward Judie went back to school last month, his local daily newspaper was there, too.

Judie wasn't the only Troops to Teacher participant getting attention from local reporters. From Miami to California to Washington state, dozens of Troops to Teachers were featured in "going back to school" stories in newspapers around the country last month.

The Tacoma News Tribune featured Judie and several other local Troops to Teachers in an article titled "Yes, sir, teacher sir!" (click [here](#) for the full story)

The article focuses on the benefits of Judie's military training and how it has transferred into public education.

Judie spent 26 years in the Army, retiring as a Command Sergeant Major. Utilizing Troops to Teachers, he became a special education teacher at Tacoma's Lincoln High School in 2001. He later earned his administrative credentials at City University.

The article states:

"Judie shows no tolerance for nonsense from his students. At the same time, he helps teens understand why they need discipline to scale the walls of high school.

'We're flexible enough to realize that we're dealing with young adults who may not have discipline in their lives,' Judie said, 'which is a cornerstone of education.'"

The article also noted how Judie's background is especially useful in a school district where 39 percent of students come from military families.

Read TTT stories online

For a searchable list of current newspaper articles featuring Troops to Teachers click [here](#).

Judie's wife, Joyce Judie, was also mentioned in the article. Like her husband, she also retired as an Army sergeant and utilized Troops to Teachers to find a teaching position. Joyce Judie teaches humanities at Clover Park's Lochburn Middle School.

Twenty-six-year Army veteran John Hutzell is also featured in the article. Hutzell was in infantry company commander at Fort Carson, Colo., where he helped young people train for mechanized warfare.

"He saw many overcome disadvantages related to poverty and single-parent homes. By becoming a special education teacher, he hoped to help children struggling in similar situations, but with problems compounded by physical or mental disabilities.

'I felt I could make a difference with those kids,' he said, 'and make them see that they have a contribution to make and they can get over those hurdles.'"



Former Army sergeant Edward Judie is now the assistant principal at Lakewood (Wash.) Clover Park High School. — Photo courtesy of Janet Jensen, Tacoma News Tribune

TTT briefs

TTT breaks the 9,300 mark in hires

Troops to Teachers has broken the 9,300 mark according to the program's latest status report.

As of Oct. 1, the report states that 9,345 teachers have been hired through the program, with Troops to Teachers represented in more than 3,000 school districts across the country.

Texas leads the way with 1,535 hires, followed by Florida (750), Virginia (690), California (579) and Georgia (566).



Spouses to Teachers heading to Europe

Spouses to Teachers is now available in Europe, offering resources and counseling to overseas military spouses interested in a professional and portable teaching career.

The Department of Defense program — currently offered in 14 states — provides counseling and guidance on state-specific certification requirements, certification options and state employment resources. Up to \$600 also is available to reimburse the costs of testing fees associated with teacher certification/licensure. Participants in Europe will receive certification counseling and assistance for CONUS.

More than 300 military spouses have found teaching jobs in the U.S. and overseas by utilizing the program and more than 1,000 have been reimbursed for teacher certification exams.

Eligible participants include spouses of active duty personnel, Selected Reserve and National Guard, and Individual Ready Reserve recalled to active duty.

For additional information, contact Spouses to Teachers at (800) 231-6282 or DSN 922-6282, visit www.SpousetoTeachers.com or e-mail the program at stt@voled.doded.mil.



Program funding to remain at current levels

Troops to Teachers continues to be recognized as a program that is bringing highly qualified teachers to public education who are having a positive impact on student achievement throughout the country.

As a result the program will be funded at the same level as in past years. The President's Budget for fiscal year 2007 recommended the Troops to Teachers budget remain at the \$14.6 million level. The Labor/Health and Human Services/Education Appropriations Bill, currently moving through the House and Senate, supports this level of funding.



Although Congress has not as yet voted on the 2007 Appropriations Bill, Troops to Teachers will receive "Continuing Resolution" funding to maintain operations until the Bill is passed. For information on the language related to Troops to Teachers in the House Report on the Appropriations Bill, click [here](#).

To follow the budget process, click [here](#).

In the community

TTT alum walking to help future teachers

Joseph Cofield used Troops to Teachers to find a teaching position after retiring from the Army. Now he's trying to help future teachers through the Phi Delta Kappa's Walk for Education.



Joseph Cofield

Mr. Cofield is a social studies teacher at Bonita Springs Middle School in Naples, Fla., and also heads the school's College Reach Out Program (CROP).

He is also the co-chairperson of Phi Delta Kappa's Southwest Florida chapter's 2nd Annual Walk for Education that will be held on Oct. 7. The event is hoping to raise \$5,000, with money raised going toward a scholarship trust fund helping student interns offset the cost of becoming full-time student teachers.



Want to help?

For more information on the SW Florida chapter's PDK Walk, contact Mr. Cofield by e-mail by clicking [here](#). To find out more about PDK click [here](#).

PDK is a 100-year-old public education advocacy group that, among other functions, helps raise money for local charities and teacher scholarships through its Walk for Education.

The Southwest Florida chapter is one of 650 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia, many of which will be holding similar walks in October.

In their own words...

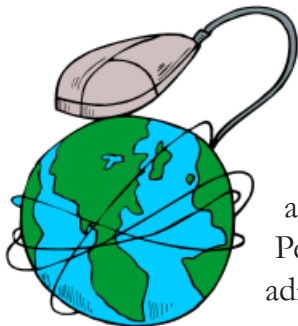
"After 28 years proudly serving our country I continued my educational endeavors, attending South Puget Sound Community College's Early Childhood Development



Bradshaw

Program in Olympia, Wa....While taking courses between the two schools I took interest in Evergreen's Master in Teaching Program, a two- year graduate program...The opportunity for me attending school was possible through TTT and the GI Bill that supported my educational finances (for) the entire term. I recently graduated (16 June 06) with a Masters Degree and Endorsements in both Middle School Humanities and Special Education (emphasis on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders). I am eager to begin my new career in teaching children and the offers for my skilled areas are never ending. Well, my advice to those who wish to succeed is to stay motivated and keep the desire to want to make others successful while making a difference in their lives."

— Retired Army Command Sergeant Major Eugene Bradshaw began his first year of teaching last month at Lakewood (Wash.) Lochburn Middle School as a Special Education teacher.



Four Troops to Teachers videos now available online

Troops to Teachers' award-winning video "Proud to Serve Again", a public service announcement (PSA) featuring First Lady Laura Bush, a Pentagon Channel segment on the program and a video geared toward administrators are now available on the Troops to Teachers website.

"Proud to Serve Again, a 10-minute video, won the 2005 Thoth Award from the Public Relations Society of America for its quality. It features several Troops to Teachers discussing the transition from the military to the classroom and the rewards and benefits of becoming a public school teacher.

The PSA is a call by the First Lady to the military to "serve their country again", this time as teachers.

The Pentagon Channel feature focuses on 24-year Navy veteran Muhammad Foye, who teaches history at Maryland's Charles Carroll Middle School, located just outside Washington D.C. The segment includes comments about Troops to Teachers by the First Lady:

"One thing I'm very proud of is that the Troops to Teachers program is really growing. A lot of retiring military men and women are choosing to become teachers. The military life is a life of service, it's a life of service to our country, and then a lot of these men and women who've already served in the military want to continue to serve."

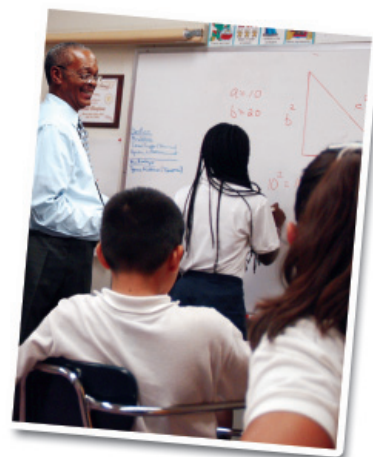
For the 10-minute video click [here](#), and for the for the Laura Bush PSA click [here](#).

The "Hiring the best with Troops to Teachers" is available [here](#), and for the Pentagon Channel feature click [here](#).

Or, you can access the videos from the Troops to Teachers main page (go to "TTT informational videos" on the left-hand column) by clicking [here](#).

System requirements: You must have Windows 2000 or above to view the 10-minute video, the Pentagon channel feature and the "Hiring the best..." video. For the PSA, you must have Windows 2000 or above PLUS the latest version of the QuickTime video player.

"The military life is a life of service; it's a life of service to our country. And then, a lot of these men and women who've already served in the military want to continue to serve."
— First Lady Laura Bush



Air Force veteran John Fredd is featured in the award-winning video "Proud to Serve Again".



Connections

Williams an American Star of Teaching

(Continued from Page 1)

In an article with his hometown paper, The Lawton Constitution, Williams said: “As a teacher, the state requires us to teach certain ‘pass objectives.’ You know what those objectives are, you set your goals and you work toward meeting the goals for the students to be able to pass the test on those objectives, while having fun along the way.”

Want to know more?

For more information on the Teacher-to-Teacher initiative, and to find out how to nominate someone for the American Star of Teaching Award, click [here](#).

Also during his time at Walters, Williams taught Starbase Oklahoma, the aerospace education program for grades 1-6 administered by the Oklahoma Army National Guard. As part of his math curriculum, Williams had his students build and launch a rocket for “Rocketry Day”, an event held at the end of every school year.

Williams spent four years in the Navy and 18 in the Army. During his time in the Army, he achieved the rank of Chief Warrant Officer Three and served in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm as part of the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery.

“In the military, especially if you’ve ever been in combat, it’s like the unit becomes a family,” Williams said at the ceremony. “It’s almost like you develop a camaraderie with your students where they want to learn.”

Have something to share?

Do you have an opinion, story, photo, news or any other type of item you think would make a good addition to *TTT Connections*, the Troops to Teachers newsletter? If so, let us hear about it.

E-mail Jim Scavino at ttt@voled.doded.mil.

